

Join the celebration (even if it's virtual)!

650 Bookstores. A dozen exclusive books and art pieces. One day only.

How to Make Bookstore Day a Smashing Success

Independent Bookstore Day is not just about the exclusive books and items, it's about the culture of books, reading, and indie bookselling. It is a *celebration* of everything we do!

While the EXCLUSIVES are a major draw (and certainly deserve a creative display), we don't want customers to simply pop in, grab what they came for, and leave. This is a chance to show off our value beyond the merchandise we sell, and welcome customers into a chummy, close relationship with our stores.

Make sure you have things, no matter how small, planned throughout the day so that every customer feels like a part of the celebration.

TOP 4 TIPS FOR IBD:

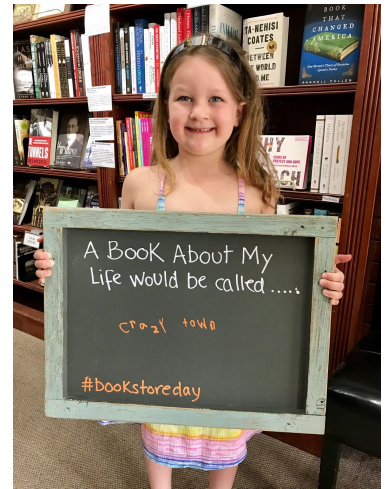
- **Appoint a point person and start early (January)**
- **Keep your celebration simple and fun**
- **Have things going on throughout the day that don't require a lot of staff attention**
- **Promote the day! In store. On social media. Use the bookmarks.**

During Covid-19 our parties and celebrations will look different. Below are ideas for socially distanced and online celebrations, events, and activities. Independent Bookstore Day will also be scheduling a series of online author events leading up to IBD.

SOCIALLY DISTANCED IN-PERSON FUN

IBD has a selection of free items in the catalog. Use these as prizes and treats for contests and games. Or use them as a gift with purchase.

- If you are able, we encourage you to use your outdoor space as much as possible.
- Use a prize wheel. Anyone who buys an IBD exclusive gets to spin for a prize. Have a staff member do the spinning to avoid contact.
- Provide slates or small whiteboards for customers to write the title of their autobiographies. If they post and tag you, give 'em a prize.
- Hang butcher paper over your window and have customers write what they love about bookstores on it.
- If you have lines out the door due to limited capacity, have a staff member facilitate a trivia game for people waiting (offer small prizes like stickers, bookstore merch, or cans of champagne to all correct answers). Bonus: you can reuse the questions throughout the day.
- Offer packaged treats like mini candy bars instead of shared food. Canned wine is better than you might think!
- Have sign-ups or appointments for special activities, like stencil-based poster making, bookmark making, book collages, mask embroidery, etc.
- If you are not open at all on IBD, consider offering tickets for private, masked shopping hours for groups of 2-6. A \$50 ticket is \$50 toward books. People miss you and will pay to browse a bookstore.



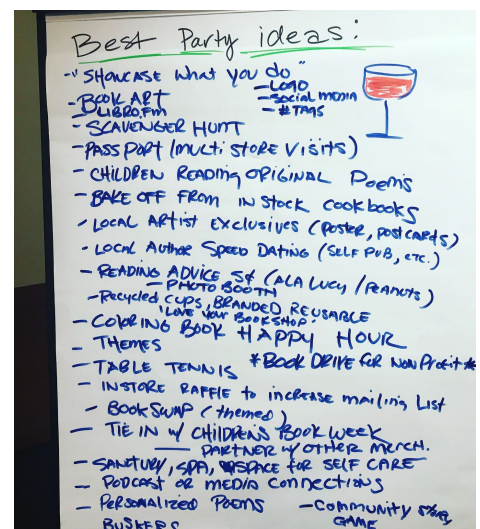
ONLINE CELEBRATION IDEAS

- Offer a small prize to anyone who posts a picture of themselves in front of your store and tags you and #IndieBookstoreDay.
- Enter anyone who posts a picture of themselves in front of your store and tags you and #IndieBookstoreDay into a drawing for a bigger prize (a private shopping hour for them and five friends? A gift certificate? Three months in your book of the month club? An IBD tote filled with galley?).
- Team up with other local stores to arrange a virtual bookstore crawl so participants document their progress on foot, bike, or car to as many bookstores as possible.

- Set up an arts and crafts table for kids and/or adults. Maybe “Drawing Your Favorite Characters.” Maybe “Collages from your favorite books.” Make bookmarks or notebooks.
- Post a giant piece of butcher paper and invite customers to write titles of their favorite books or why they love their local independent bookstore on it. Make it visible to people outside.



- Set up a one-sheet treasure or scavenger hunt and pass one out to every customer. Completed sheets can be included in a prize raffle or turned in for discounts.
- Stage a photo booth. Create a little corner where customers can create their own funny photoshoots with costumes and props. Offer small prizes for anyone who posts and tags you on social media.
- Create a book-themed “Mad Libs” station or a public Mad Libs hour.
- Have a balloon animal maker, face-painter, on-the-spot-poet, tarot reader, or caricature artist in the store.
- Set up “blind dates” with galleys or remainders wrapped in brown paper with brief, funny written descriptions. Let customers pick one with purchase.
- Have a children's treasure chest so every kid that comes in gets little something (fill it with stickers, superballs, erasers, small toys, pencils, etc.).
- Offer free literary temporary tattoos (although how fun would a real tattoo artist be....).
- Create a quiz show where authors have to answer questions about something far outside their expertise (see NPR’s *Wait, Wait, Don’t Tell Me*).
- Host meet and greet book swaps for customers. Each customer gets one minute to talk about the book they brought. At the bell, everyone is invited to swap!
- Hold a blindfolded gift-wrapping race for prizes and bragging rights. See if customers can beat your best staff wrapper.

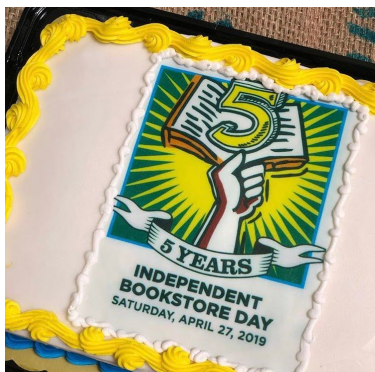


- Have a literary trivia night. Customers against staff? Authors against staff? Authors against authors? Get a brewery or pub to sponsor it?
 - Invite a local band to play in the store or have a small jazz trio play browsing music during “cocktail hour.”
 - Set up a microphone and a large collection of poetry books and invite customers to read their (one) favorite.
 - Hold a pajama party or silent reading party with tea and cookies.
 - Hold a grown-up bedtime story hour with wine and a great short story or essay.
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AUTHOR (& LOCAL CELEBRITY) EVENTS

Author events should NOT be limited to the authors involved in IBD—anyone can participate!

- Quirky author events work best. Invite authors to read and sign, but invite them to participate in a quiz, sell books, or sing karaoke, too.
- Ask a favorite author to make a list of the 10 books that have changed their life and then create a display.
- Set up a “Bookology 5¢” booth with an author, local celeb, or bookseller.
- Ask a cookbook author to do passed hors d’oeuvres, or a famous libertine to mix cocktails.
- Get a children’s author to do a mini seminar on how to create a children’s book. Or draw a character. Can’t get an author? Do you have a talented staff member?
- Ask a writer to sit in the window for a few hours and write.
- Ask a local artist to do a screen printing workshop/demo and then sell prints.



FOOD & DRINK

- Offer the first 25 or 100 customers a mimosa (or a bagel or a muffin) in the morning. Free donut hour from 10-11?
- Make IBD-themed cakes and cookies. Partner with a local bakery?

- Partner with a local beer, spirit, or wine maker to host a tasting or trivia night.
- Invite literary and/or educational non-profits to hold a bake sale in front of the store that day.
- Create themed free food/drink hours—an F. Scott Fitzgerald cocktail hour, or a Jane Austen English tea.
- Have a food truck in front of the store during lunch or dinner.

MERCHANDISING & DISPLAYS

Some customers will come in knowing what they want, but most will need an introduction to the IBD items.

- Have a display table front and center with passports, schedules, snacks, and exclusives. Include store-branded merch.
- Make a simple schedule of your IBD events (including things that are ongoing throughout the day). Hand it out at the register and include it in your display.
- Use that sidewalk chalkboard sign!
- Decorate outside: window displays, banners, balloons, a one-man-band. Make it obvious there is something going on. One store had a grill set up in front for hot dogs!
- Have a sidewalk sale (everything under \$5?) to lure them in.
- IBD provides signs, teasers, and shelf-talkers for the exclusive items. Keep it clear and simple.
- Create displays with books by IBD authors to generate excitement (there are often special terms in the IBD catalog).
- Unbox and unwrap IBD exclusives so that customers can see them. Use caution tape or danger signs to ramp up feelings of rarity.
- Enlist the talents of your staff and get creative.

